

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ADP-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 RSR-01 /125 W

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R 231015Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9522

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6645

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, JO, XF

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN-ISRAELI TELEVISION CONTACTS

1. HARUN MAHMID, DIRECTOR OF JORDANIAN TV'S HEBREW-LANGUAGE NEWS PROGRAM, APPEARED IN INTERVIEW DURING ISRAELI TV NEWSCAST EVENING OF AUGUST 22. DURING INTERVIEW, WHICH WAS FILMED AT ISRAELI TV STUDIO EARLIER IN DAY, MAHMID CHATTED IN CASUAL FRIENDLY MANNER IN EXCELLENT HEBREW WITH DIRECTOR ZUCKERMAN OF ISRAELI TV. ASKED HIS OPINION OF ISRAELI TV, WHICH HE SAID MANY JORDANIANS WATCHED, MAHMID REPLIED ITS PROGRAM QUALITY WAS GOOD, WHICH WAS NOT TO SAY THERE WAS NO REFLECTION OF ARAB-ISRAELI POLITICAL DIFFERENCES. ANSWERING ANOTHER QUESTION, MAHMID SAID HE HOPED PEACE COULD COME TO MIDDLE EAST AND THAT THERE COULD BE MORE MEETINGS LIKE HIS WITH ZUCKERMAN. MAHMID ALSO RELATED HE HAD BEEN RECOGNIZED AND GREETED WA VLY BY ISRAELIS ON STREET IN JERUSALEM WHO WERE WATCHERS OF HIS TV PROGRAM.

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2. ISRAELI PRESS AUGUST 23 IN REPORTING INTERVIEW SAYS MAHMID

WAS BORN AT UM-EL-SAHM, IN ISRAEL PROPER, THEN LIVED IN NAZARETH, AND MOVED TO JORDAN ABOUT 1963. ACCORDING TO PRESS MAHMID WHO VISITING RELATIVES IN JERUSALEM TOOK INITIATIVE OF TELEPHONING ZUCKERMAN AUGUST 21 TO SUGGEST MEETING. ONE PAPER SAYS MAHMID TOLD ISRAELI TV OFFICIALS THAT JOB OF JORDANIAN TV WAS TO FIGHT ISRAELI PROPAGANDA; THAT ALTHOUGH ISRAEL TALKED A LOT ABOUT PEACE, JORDAN WAS READY TO TAKE REAL STEPS TOWARD A PEACE WHICH WOULD GUARANTEE ARAB RIGHTS; AND THERE SOMETIMES WERE ERRORS IN NEWS REPORTING OF ISRAELI TV WHICH MIGHT BE INTENTIONAL.

3. EARLIER AUGUST 22, DURING COURTESY CALL ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS DIRECTOR VERED OF MFA, AMMAN EMBOFF MCCLINTOCK NOTED REUTERS AUGUST 21 CARRIED REPORT FROM JERUSALEM THAT MAHMID HAD CALLED ON ZUCKERMAN. ACCOMPANYING TEL AVIV EMBOFF RECALLED RECENT CASE OF VISIT TO ISRAEL BY UN SOCIAL WELFARE EXPERT OF PALESTINIAN ARAB ORIGIN STATIONED IN SAUDI ARABIA, WHOSE CALL ON ISRAELI SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY WAS LEAKED TO PRESS AUGUST 6 (TEL AVIV 6244 NOTAL). IN REACTION, SAUDIS REPORTEDLY HAD BARRED EXPERT FROM RETURNING TO SAUDI ARABIA. MRS VERED WONDERED IF JORDANIAN TV OFFICIAL IN TURN MIGHT LOSE JOB.

4. MRS VERED, WHO WAS FAMILIAR WITH JORDANIAN'S VISIT, SAID WEARILY THERE SEEMED NO HOPE OF PREVENTING SUCH PUBLICITY, WHICH GOI REGRETTE. GOI OFTEN REITERATED INTERNALLY ITS STANDING INSTRUCTIONS TO AVOID SUCH PUBLICITY, AS IT WAS HARDLY IN ISRAEL'S INTEREST. BUT SOMETIMES OFFICIALS WORKING TECHNICAL BRANCHES OF GOVT AND NOT DEALING WITH ARAB-ISRAELI POLITICAL MATTERS BLUNDERED IN THEIR EXUBERANCE.

5. MRS VERED MENTIONED THAT JORDANIAN TV OFFICIALS WORKING IN REGULAR PROGRAMMING (I.E. ARABIC) FREQUENTLY CALLED ON STAFF OF ISRAELI TV ARABIC-LANGUAGE SERVICE. CORDIAL RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAD GROWN UP HAD NEVER BEEN MARRED BY PUBLICITY BECAUSE ISRAELIS INVOLVED WERE CAUTIOUS.

6. COMMENT. IN VIEW OF MRS VERED'S ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL DAMAGE TO MAHMID OF EARLIER PUBLICITY, AND YET VOLUNTARY NATURE OF HIS SUBSEQUENT APPEARANCE ON ISRAELI TV, WE WONDER IF HE HAS MADE SERIOUS MISTAKE OR WHETHER JORDAN-ISRAEL TRANQUIL
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RELATIONSHIP HAS EVOLVED TO POINT PERMITTING NORMAL CONTACTS IN SOME FIELDS.
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